

## II. BACKGROUND FOR THE SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### A. THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION

#### Mission Statement

The Town of Colma, in partnership with business organizations, property owners, local businesses, and residents, seeks to enhance economic development within our Town by providing the services and infrastructure necessary to retain, support and grow our vital business community.

### B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS<sup>1</sup>

On February 11, 2009, the City Council approved four goals for the Short-Term Economic Development Strategy. During the public outreach process, two additional goals were identified. All six proposed Economic Development Goals<sup>2</sup> were reviewed and supported by the Resident Focus Group as part of the community engagement process. The Goals establish specific desired outcomes that carry out the overall Mission. The Goals are as follows:

#### **Goal 1: Retain and enhance existing auto-related businesses.**

Work with property owners and commercial property managers to fill vacancies, conduct outreach to auto related businesses, and identify improvements that would enhance the Auto Row area.

#### **Goal 2: Retain and attract value-based and off-price retailers at existing shopping centers.**

Colma has several successful regional commercial retailers, and there may be market support for additional retail space. Work to fill vacancies, identify desirable businesses, and market vacant parcels to potential tenants by noting our convenient

<sup>1</sup> During the public outreach process, these were referred to as "Action Items." In writing the Strategy report, the terms were changed slightly so that the term, "Action Item" now refers to specific economic development activities and the desired outcomes (formerly called Action Items) are now called Goals.

<sup>2</sup> When the City Council approved proceeding with the Short Term Economic Development Strategy on February 11, 2009, only four goals were included. Goals 5 and 6 were added during the public outreach process.

location, the Town's commitment to public safety, business-friendly regulatory environment and ample parking.

**Goal 3: Increase dining opportunities at existing buildings.**

Attract more dining uses, including family dining, fine dining and kid-friendly dining places to host parties and other gatherings.

**Goal 4: Retain and attract neighborhood-serving retail uses at existing shopping centers.**

Work with property owners and managers to identify optimal retail spaces and parcels for these local-serving uses, and work with the property owners and managers to fill vacant spaces with these uses where appropriate.

**Goal 5: Develop and implement a marketing and branding plan for Colma, to bring shoppers to the Town and to help draw attention to Colma's unique identity.**

Market Colma's unique land uses, small town feel, variety of desired shopping opportunities, and convenient location through a comprehensive marketing campaign to market three sectors: Auto Row, Retail Commercial and Tourism.

**Goal 6: Identify opportunities to streamline development permit process for new and existing businesses.**

Make it as easy as possible for the uses and businesses wanted in Colma to expand or locate here. Identify changes in the permitting process that provide for faster permit approval timelines and more predictable requirements for expanding or new businesses.

## **C. ACTION ITEMS FOR THE SHORT-TERM STRATEGY**

This section contains the Action Items that make up the Short-Term Strategy. Some Action Items apply to only a single Goal; others may relate to two or more Goals. The Action Items also differ in their duration. Some Action Items require ongoing City efforts. Other Action Items require significant effort during the initial start-up phase and then require only minor effort to keep them operating. Still others are studies to gain a better understanding of Colma and have a starting and ending point with a specific product as the outcome. The Action Items can be implemented as staff time and resources permit. While the Action Items are intended to work together, not all Action Items must also be completed to advance Colma's Economic Development Goals.

These Action Items are organized by increasing levels of resources needed to act upon them. The categories are as follows:



1. Renewing and focusing existing efforts.
2. New efforts within existing staff resources.
3. New efforts through partnering with others.
4. New efforts requiring additional funding.

**1. Renewing and focusing existing efforts.**

**a. Continue and expand the Mayor-Chamber Walks.**

Continue the annual Mayor and Chamber of Commerce Walk to visit local businesses to maintain and build relationships with the business community. Consider doing more than one walk a year.

**b. Increase visits by senior Town staff with business owners to enhance Town-business relationships.**

Establish a formal program of having senior staff, such as the City Manager, Public Works Director, Chief of Police and the City Planner meet with individual business owners to communicate that they are important to Colma, to ask what the Town could do better, to understand the challenges their business faces, their business plans, and their expansion needs, and to offer assistance where appropriate.

**c. Maintain ongoing communication with property owners, property managers, owners and operators of existing Colma shopping centers.**

Establish a formal program of having senior staff, such as the City Manager, Public Works Director, Chief of Police and the City Planner meet at least once a year with the management of Colma's shopping centers to communicate that they are important to Colma, to ask what the Town could do better, to learn the challenges their shopping center faces, and to offer assistance where appropriate. The meetings may also serve as an opportunity to discuss strategies to improve customer and business attraction efforts, operations, signage, circulation and center design elements.

**d. Continue membership in the Colma-Daly City Chamber of Commerce. Have senior staff, the Mayor and Council members participate in Chamber events, such as Chamber mixers.**

**2. New efforts within existing staff resources.**

**a. Prepare written materials that highlight Colma's advantages and opportunities as a business location. Provide this information to commercial**

**real estate owners, owners of commercial property, and other interested persons.**

Prepare and keep updated written materials that highlight Colma's advantages and opportunities as a business location. Include information about the various commercial areas and allowed uses, the available buildings and property, and contact information for City staff that can help them and their clients with information about development, building, and sign permits

**b. Streamline the Town's permitting process.**

Review and update Colma's permitting process to make it efficient and user-friendly. Consider authorizing staff to approve routine permits for many commercial uses and Home Office Use Permits. This change would allow such permits to be handled by staff faster and a more cost-effective basis.

**c. Update the Town's website to ensure information about and for the business community is easily and readily available.**

Add a "Business Assistance" page to include information about the town and helpful to people considering establishing or expanding a business in Colma. Include helpful links to relevant websites.

**d. Participate in the Colma-Daly City Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Expo.**

Colma has attended the Annual Business Expo in the past. This event provides opportunities to improve or start new relationships with businesses in the area, and to promote Colma's advantages as a business location. Participation by staff and Council members should be focused on these opportunities.

**3. New efforts through partnering with others**

**a. Assist the Colma-Daly City Chamber of Commerce with initiatives to promote Colma and attract additional businesses and customers to the Town.**

**b. Continue to work with the Colma-Daly City Chamber of Commerce and the Colma Historical Association to promote festivals and special events in Colma.**

**c. Identify Available Resources for Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction.**

Assemble information about local and regional resources that Colma can draw on to assist its businesses to stay and expand in Colma and to attract new businesses so that the Town of Colma is able to act quickly when opportunities



arise. Examples of resources include the Small Business Administration, local lenders, and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE). Distribute this information to Town staff and the Mayor and Council Members, interested businesses, business organizations and post it on the Town's website.

#### **4. New efforts requiring additional funding.**

- a. Develop and maintain on the Town's website a list of available buildings for lease or sale and the contact information for the property owners, managers, or real estate brokers.**
- b. Initiate a Request for Proposals process for development of a Retail Identification Study.**

A Retail Identification Study profiles the consumers in the region, specifically focusing on the spending habits and lifestyles of customers in Colma's trade area. After comparing the information on the trade area with the core customer profiles of regional and national businesses, the study will recommend retailers and restaurants whose client bases match that of the sites. The goal of Retail Identification Study is to match a specific retailer's profile to that of the Colma's trade area profile. Where there is a close match of the retailer's location profile with the household profile of the trade area, the retailer is selected as a target for recruitment. If there is a mismatch of profiles, then the retailer is not as highly considered.

- c. Explore establishing the Serramonte Auto Row Business Improvement District.**

Work with Auto Row retailers to determine viability of forming a Business Improvement District to assist in funding implementation of the Marketing Program.

- d. Initiate a Request for Proposals on a Master Marketing Program for Colma.**

A comprehensive marketing plan, categorized into sectors of Serramonte Auto Row, Retail Commercial and Tourism, could be developed to focus visitors and potential visitors on Colma's various commercial areas and unique assets and to further unify the businesses within each sector. This effort could include the following:

##### **Serramonte Auto Row Marketing Program**

Develop a creative marketing approach specifically aimed at Auto Row uses.

##### **Retail Commercial Marketing Program**

- Develop a creative marketing approach to attract retail businesses not already existing in Colma.

- Identify and market to targeted retailers.

**e. Develop and Implement a Tourism marketing program.**

Promote Colma as having easy access via Highway 280 and close proximity to San Francisco, the San Mateo County Coast, and Silicon Valley.

Request from Caltrans directional and informational signage on Highway 280 for Colma as a historic community.

Research possible development of a “Heritage Tourism” program in Colma. This could include:

- ✓ Promoting Colma, including the Historical Park and Museum, in advertisements and collateral materials. A marketing campaign could jointly feature several significant heritage attractions in Colma and nearby areas.
- ✓ Developing a comprehensive branding effort that links marketing materials, key sites and directional signage to elevate Colma’s cultural heritage attractions in the marketplace.
- ✓ Work with the San Mateo County Convention and Visitor’s Bureau and the San Francisco Convention and Visitor’s Bureau to feature resource materials and pages to promote Colma’s cultural heritage tourism.
- ✓ Promote Historic Colma as an alternative day trip for conventioners in San Mateo County and San Francisco through the Convention and Visitor’s Bureaus.
- ✓ Seek potential grant funding that can be used for historic resource conservation, preservation, marketing and other activities, including Federal funding.
- ✓ Develop a tourism database to catalogue cultural heritage attractions and to serve a variety of tourism purposes, including: putting the database on tourism on the Town website; provide a searchable tool to be used to develop itineraries or other tourism products; provide industry contact information to better connect Colma’s heritage tourism network and to identify tourism development.

**f. Promote Colma as a location for movie and advertisement filming, and as the location of many literary works.**

**g. Assess the feasibility of establishing a shuttle service to provide easier shopping access from mass transit hubs to and around Colma shopping centers.**

Work with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to investigate the potential of a shuttle van service to provide regular transportation during peak shopping periods between key shopping districts in Colma and the local BART



stations. A market survey of residents in the trade area would help gauge potential demand and identify the target market for services. Investigate the potential for an initial pilot program during the holiday season.

**h. Establish a Gift Card Incentive Program.**

Work with the Colma-Daly City Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to establish a “Shop Colma First” gift card incentive program. For example, the purchaser of a new car from a Colma auto dealership might receive a gift card to another Colma business.

**i. Enhance Existing Business-to-Business (“B2B”) Program.**

Work with the Colma-Daly City Chamber of Commerce to enhance the B2B program in Colma. B2B activity can make up a significant portion of Colma’s taxable sales. A B2B Program can include actions that facilitate transactions between two companies, as opposed to a transaction involving a consumer. A program may include facilitating business relationships between businesses that result in the trade or sales of goods or services.

**j. Retain a Consultant to Work with Colma to Develop a Long-Range Economic Development Plan**

With a longer time horizon, other economic development actions may be important. Examples include:

- ✓ **Attract new hospitality uses near BART stations.** (e.g. attract small boutique hotel uses, promote Colma’s location, etc.)
- ✓ **Reconfigure Collins Avenue and Serramonte Road to expand retail space** (e.g. determine feasibility, conduct cost/benefit analysis, expand floor area ratio limitations to maximize square footage, explore ingress/egress of auto row, etc.)
- ✓ **Focus new development on Old Mission Road.**
- ✓ **Focus new development on El Camino Real.**
- ✓ **Expand hospice and retirement home uses along El Camino Real.** (e.g. explore revenue generation opportunities, encourage expansions, etc.)
- ✓ **Attract job and revenue generating land uses to parcels near the Colma BART Station.** (e.g. work with property owners and managers to fill vacancies, work with landowners to identify optimal uses, etc.)

Preparing a Long Range Economic Development Plan would provide for consideration of actions that may have a longer implementation timeline and a longer timeline to achieve results. It would also allow for consideration of undertakings with a greater financial commitment.

### III. CONCLUSION

Economic Development needs to be an ongoing process for the Town of Colma. The Short-Term Economic Development Strategy, summarized in the following table, provides focus and direction for Town initiatives in the near-term. The list of Action Items provides initiatives that the Town can undertake now but the list is by no means exhaustive. Additional Action Items may be identified and added to the list as Colma's economic development efforts proceed. Others may be changed or deleted as circumstances change, as the Town collects or receives better information, as opportunities present themselves, and as Colma builds greater economic development expertise with its businesses, residents, and City staff. The important thing is to get started and to commit to making economic development an ongoing part of the Town's planning for the future.